

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 SP-03 L-03 H-03 NSC-07 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 VO-03

SCA-01 INSE-00 TRSE-00 SIL-01 LAB-06 DRC-01 /100 W

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R 052328Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2593

INFO AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ

AMCONSUL GUADALAJARA

AMCONSUL HERMOSILLO

AMCONSUL MATAMOROS

AMCONSUL MAZATLAN

AMCONSUL MERIDA

AMCONSUL MONTERREY

AMCONSUL NUEVO LAREDO

AMCONSUL TIJUANA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, MX

SUBJ: TREATMENT OF ALIENS ILLEGALLY IN UNITED STATES

REFS: A) MEXICO 5495

B) MEXICO 5239

C) MEXICO 5172

D) MEXICO 5172

1. SUMMARY: EMBOFF (POLITICAL OFFICER RICHARD ZORN) ACCOMPANIED BY CONSULS GENERAL OF TIJUANA AND CIUDAD JUAREZ RESPECTIVELY, VISITED INS FACILITIES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AND EL PASO, TEXAS, JUNE 26-29 AND FOUND ALL FACILITIES WERE WELL-RUN AND CLEAN. NEITHER MEXICAN CONSULAR OFFICERS NOR ALIENS INTERVIEWED AT RANDOM IN THE INS FACILITIES HAD ANY COMPLAINTS EITHER ABOUT THE CONDITIONS IN THE FACILITIES OR THE INS TREATMENT OF ALIENS

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UNDER THEIR JURISDICTION. MEXICAN CONSULAR OFFICERS WHO

REGULARLY VISITED EL CENTRO AND EL PASO DETENTION CENTERS STATED THAT INS OFFICERS IN BOTH FACILITIES COOPERATED WITH THEM CLOSELY. EMBOFF VISIT HAS REASSURED EMBASSY THAT CRITICISM OF INS AND ITS FACILITIES IN FONSEC NOTE (REFS C AND D) AND SUBSEQUENT MEXICAN PRESS REPORTS IS COMPLETELY UNWARRANTED AND WILL ENABLE EMBASSY CONFIDENTLY TO REFUTE CRITICISM IN DISCUSSING THE SUBJECT WITH MEXICAN OFFICIALS AND OPINION LEADERS. END SUMMARY.

2. "DETENTION CENTER" IS AN UNFORTUNATE AND SOMEWHAT MIS-LEADING TERM FOR THE INS FACILITIES AT EL CENTRO AND EL PASO (AND ALSO PORT ISABEL WHICH SUBJECT OF SEPARATE REPORT BY CONSULATE MATAMOROS). TERM HAS PERHAPS STRONGER CONNOTATION AND ASSOCIATIONS IN SPANISH THAN IN ENGLISH (SEE PARA 4 BELOW). INS MAKES EVERYEFFORT TO REPATRIATE ALIENS FROM THESE CENTERS AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE. NINETY-SEVEN OR NINETY-EIGHT PERCENT OF THE ALIENS ARE PERMITTED TO RETURN TO THEIR COUNTRIES AS SOON AS THEIR GOVERNMENTS WILL ACCEPT THEM. THE OTHER TWO OR THREE PERCENT OF ALIENS ARE SUBJECT ONLY TO DEPORTATION HEARINGS. THESE HEARINGS ARE CONDUCTED DAILY RIGHT IN THE CAMPS WHERE THE ALIENS ARE HELD SO THAT THESE CAN BE CONCLUDED AND THE ALIENS REPATRIATED EXPEDITIOUSLY AS POSSIBLE. (ALIENS CHARGED WITH CRIMINAL OFFENSES ARE GENERALLY NOT HELD IN THE CENTERS BUT INSTEAD TURNED OVER TO APPROPRIATE FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL AUTHORITIES FOR ARREST AND PROSECUTION).

3. THE AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY FOR ALIENS IN THESE CENTERS IS SHORT, ESPECIALLY FOR MEXICANS. THE GOM PERMITS ITS CITIZENS TO RETURN WITHOUT PASSPORTS, BIRTH CERTIFICATES, OR OTHER SPECIAL DOCUMENTATION, SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF INTERVIEWS TO VERIFY MEXICAN CITIZENSHIP. CONSEQUENTLY, THE AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY FOR MEXICANS IN THESE CENTERS IS TWO OR THREE DAYS. (EMBOFF MET ONE MEXICAN PREPARING TO DEPART FROM THE EL CENTRO CENTER WHO HAD ONLY BEEN THERE FOR NINE HOURS. HE SAID IT WAS HIS THIRD TIME IN THAT FACILITY AND HE HAD NO COMPLAINTS ABOUT IT).

4. IN THE CASE OF ALIENS FROM COUNTRIES BESIDES MEXICO, INS ASSISTS IN WRITING THE PROPER AUTHORITIES TO REQUEST PASSPORTS AND BIRTH CERTIFICATES AND OCCASIONALLY SENDS CABLES OR MAKES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE CALLS TO HELP EXPEDITE THE ISSUANCE OF NECESSARY DOCUMENTS. EMBOFF DISCUSSED AMBASSADOR JOVA'S RECOMMENDATION THAT THE DETENTION CENTERS BE RENAMED REPATRIATION CENTERS WITH INS OFFICERS. MR. DAVID BLACKWELL, INS REGIONAL DIRECTOR IN EL PASO, ENDORSED THIS NOTING THAT THE CENTERS ARE NOT PENAL INSTITUTIONS AND HENCE REPATRIATION CENTER IS A MUCH MORE ACCURATE AND APPROPRIATE NAME.

6. ALLEGATIONS THAT THESE CENTERS ARE "CONCENTRATION CAMPS" AND CHARACTERIZED BY REPRESSION ARE COMPLETELY WITHOUT FOUNDATION. GUARDS IN THE CENTERS DO NOT CARRY GUNS, MACE, OR EVEN NIGHT STICKS. DURING THE NIGHT, ONE COMPLETELY UNARMED GUARD STAYS IN EACH BARRACKS WITH APPROXIMATELY ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY ALIENS. WHEN ALIENS ARE MOVED FROM THEIR BARRACKS TO ANOTHER SECTION OF THE CENTER, IT IS UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF ONLY TWO UNARMED GUARDS.

7. ADDITIONALLY, ALIENS ARE PERMITTED TO USE PUBLIC TELEPHONES, LOCATED IN THE CENTERS, TO CALL THEIR CONSULAR REPRESENTATIVES, LAWYERS OR ANYONE ELSE THROUGHOUT THE DAY. CONSULAR OFFICERS ARE PERMITTED TO VISIT THE CENTERS AS FREQUENTLY OR FOR AS LONG AS THEY DESIRE. THE MEXICAN CONSULATE IN CALEXICO SENDS ONE OF ITS OFFICERS TO THE CENTER IN EL CENTRO AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK AND SOMETIMES AS OFTEN AS 5 DAYS A WEEK, WHILE THE CONSULATE IN EL PASO HAS AN OFFICER VISIT THE CENTER DAILY, FROM 1-3 PM ON WEEK DAYS.

8. DURING MEETINGS WITH EMBOFF, THE MEXICAN CONSULAR OFFICERS WHO REGULARLY VISIT CENTERS IN EL CENTRO AND EL PASO STATED THAT INS OFFICERS AT BOTH THE CENTERS GAVE THEM COMPLETE COOPERATION AND THAT THEY WERE NOT AWARE OF ANY SERIOUS COMPLAINTS REGARDING THE CENTERS. MEXICAN VICE CONSUL MARIO MORALES IN CALEXICO STATED THAT HIS MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS WERE (1) MEXICANS RECENTLY RELEASED FROM PRISON WHO OBJECTED TO BEING HELD IN A CENTER EVEN FOR A FEW DAYS ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY HAD ALREADY SERVED THEIR SENTENCES AND (2) ASSISTING MEXICANS IN THE CENTERS TO COLLECT THEIR WAGES AND PROPERTY FROM FORMER EMPLOYERS AND OTHERS WHO OCCASIONALLY ATTEMPTED TO CHEAT THEM. (INS ALSO CITED THE FORMER AS ONE OF ITS MOST VEXING PROBLEMS. PERHAPS INS COULD MAKE GREATER EFFORTS TO PROCESS ALIEN CONVICTS WHILE THEY ARE SERVING THEIR PRISON SENTENCES IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THEIR POST-PRISON DETENTION). IN RESPONSE TO EMBOFF'S INQUIRY ABOUT PHYSICAL VIOLENCE AND INJURIES TO DETAINEES, MORALES SAID THAT WHILE A FEW MEXICANS IN THE CENTER HAD CLAIMED THEY WERE STRUCK BY A GUARD, HE HAD NEVER FOUND ANY EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THESE ALLEGATIONS. HE NOTED THAT HE HAD OCCASIONALLY RECEIVED COMPLAINTS ABOUT AND SEEN INJURIES RECEIVED AT THE TIME OF APPREHENSION BUT THESE WERE INFREQUENT AND PROBABLY THE RESULT OF RESISTANCE TO APPREHENSION. (NONE OF THE APPROXIMATELY 700 ALIENS THE EMBOFF SAW AT EL CENTRO, CHULA VISTA, OR EL PASO APPEARED TO BE INJURED OR MISTREATED IN ANY MANNER) MEXICAN CONSULAR OFFICER ROBERTO QUEREDO IN EL PASO SAID THE ONLY COMPLAINT ABOUT THE CAMP THERE WAS THAT THE AUTHORITIES DID NOT PROVIDE LARGE ENOUGH MEALS ALTHOUGH HE READILY CONCEDED THAT THE QUALITY OF THE MEALS WAS GOOD. EMBOFF ATE LUNCH (TOMATO-RICE SOUP, CHICKEN SALAD, POTATO CHIPS, 2 SLICES OF

BREAD, AND KOOL AID) AND DINNER (STUFFED MEAT LOAF, MASHED POTATOES, CORN ON THE COB, TWO SLICES OF BREAD, AND KOOL AID) WITH THE DETAINEES AT EL CENTRO AND FOUND THAT THESE MEALS WERE APPETIZING AND ADEQUATE. MOREOVER, THE KITCHEN, DISHES AND UTENSILS WERE ALL SANITARY. THE MEALS AT EL PASO APPEARED TO BE OF THE SAME QUALITY AND QUANTITY.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 SP-03 L-03 H-03 NSC-07 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 VO-03

SCA-01 INSE-00 TRSE-00 SIL-01 LAB-06 DRC-01 /100 W

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R 052328Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2594

INFO AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ

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9. THE DETENTION CENTERS WERE CLEAN, ORDERLY, AND TRANQUIL. EXTREME HEAT LIMITED SPORTS SUCH AS SOCCER AND VOLLEY BALL TO THE EARLY MORNING AND EARLY EVENINGS. CONSEQUENTLY MOST INMATES HAD LITTLE TO DO EXCEPT WATCH TELEVISION, PLAY CHECKERS, PLAY PING PONG, AND TALK AMONG THEMSELVES IN A MEDIUM-SIZED RECREATION BUILDING. BOREDOM SEEMED TO BE A REAL PROBLEM. THE CENTERS HAVE NO LIBRARY AND BOOKS AND MAGAZINES SEEMED VERY SCARCE. PERHAPS INS SHOULD CONSIDER PROVIDING A LARGER COVERED RECREATION AREA TO RELIEVE THIS PROBLEM.

10. IN EL CENTRO, EMBOFF ALSO VISITED CELL BLOCK IN THE COUNTY JAIL RESERVED FOR FEMALE ALIENS WHO ARE AWAITING REPATRIATION. WHILE THESE WOMEN ARE SEPARATED FROM FEMALE CRIMINALS IN A CLEAN, ORDERLY CELL BLOCK WHICH IS PAINTED PINK AND HAS A TELEVISION AS WELL AS AN AMPLE SUPPLY OF BOOKS, MAGAZINES, AND GAMES, THE CELL BLOCK LACKS WINDOWS AND CONSEQUENT-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LY HAD A DISMAL ATMOSPHERE. APPARENTLY THE FACT THAT INS HAS SO FEW WOMEN ALIENS TO REPATRIATE FROM EL CENTRO (ONLY 4 OF THE 14 PLACES IN THIS CELL BLOCK WERE OCCUPIED) MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE TO OPERATE A SEPARATE INS FACILITY FOR WOMEN THERE. IF WOMEN ARE HELD FOR MORE THAN A FEW DAYS, PERHAPS INS COULD AND SHOULD AVOID PLACING WOMEN IN JAIL BY MERGING SEVERAL DISTRICTS AND TRANSPORTING WOMEN TO A CENTRAL FACILITY ESPECIALLY FOR THEM.

11. EMBASSY IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR ON PROCEDURES FOLLOWED AT INS CENTERS AND STAGING FACILITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION. IN RECENT TV REPORT BROADCAST IN MEXICO, AN INS OFFICIAL IN EL PASO SAID USG PAYS FARES OF INDIGENTS TO THEIR HOMES. EMBASSY HAS ALSO, HOWEVER, HEARD THAT USG PAYS NO COSTS BEYOND BORDER. EMBOFF NOTED THAT ALL FACILITIES HE VISITED HAD AN ARRANGEMENT WITH MEXICAN BUS COMPANIES, AND IN THE CASE OF CHULA VISTA WITH A MEXICAN AIRLINE AS WELL, UNDER WHICH INS PERMITTED REPRESENTATIVES OF THESE COMPANIES TO SELL TICKETS TO DETAINEES INSIDE OF INS FACILITIES FOR CHARTER BUSES AND FLIGHTS TO THE INTERIOR OF MEXICO. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INS POLICY STATEMENTS RE TRANSPORTATION OF MEXICANS. UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES, IF ANY, DOES THE USG PAY FOR TRANSPORTING MEXICANS TO HOMES IN INTERIOR? ARE MEXICANS WHO HAVE SUFFICIENT FUNDS REQUIRED OR ENCOURAGED BY INS TO PURCHASE TICKETS TO HOMES IN INTERIOR?

12. EMBASSY IS CONSIDERING MAKING SUBSTANCE OF THIS REPORT AVAILABLE TO FOREIGN SECRETARY RABASA AND GOVERNMENT SECRETARY MOYA PALENCIA.

13. EMBASSY DEEPLY APPRECIATES COOPERATION OF INS OFFICERS WHO WERE VERY FORTHCOMING AND OF CONSULS GENERAL IN TIJUANA AND CIUDAD JUAREZ WHO WERE VERY HELPFUL. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE DEPUTY SUPERVISOR OF THE CENTER AT EL CENTRO, MR RAYMOND LYONS, SAID THAT GOM OFFICIALS AND THE PRESS ARE WELCOME TO VISIT HIS ENTIRE FACILITY AT ANY TIME THEY DESIRE AND WITHOUT ADVANCE NOTICE. PHOTOGRAPHS MAY BE TAKEN EXCEPT THAT IT IS AGAINST INS REGULATIONS TO PERMIT UNOFFICIAL FACIAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF ALIENS WHICH COULD BE USED TO IDENTIFY THEM.

14. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT THE DEPARTMENT DISCUSS WITH INS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EMBASSY RECOMMENDATIONS ABOVE (I.E. CHANGING NAME OF CENTER, ESTABLISHING A CENTRAL FACILITY FOR WOMEN, PROCESSING ALIENS IN PRISON TO MINIMIZE SUBSEQUENT DETENTION, AND PROVIDING ADDITIONAL RECREATION FACILITIES), AND OBTAIN INFORMATION ON USG POLICY ON TRANSPORTATION OF MEXICANS. EMBASSY ALSO REQUESTS THAT DEPARTMENT VERIFY INS WILLING TO RECEIVE GOM OFFICIALS WHO WISH TO VISIT CENTERS.
JOVA

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DETENTION, IMMIGRANTS, RESIDENT ALIENS, PRISONERS WELFARE, PRISON CONDITIONS, REENTRY PERMITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: blochd0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Unique ID: 00
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740179-0555
From: MEXICO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740773/aaaackjt.tel
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